

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A data conversion apparatus [converting data including audio contents to super distribution format data and outputting the super distribution format data to be supplied to an external recording apparatus to be recorded therein,]

[said super distribution format data including said audio contents and attribute information which represents at least a charge condition permitting a copy of the audio contents,]

said data conversion apparatus comprising:

a data transmission/receiving section [for transmitting and receiving data to and from an external equipment;]

a data format judging section [for judging whether or not the data is of a super distribution format;]

an attribute information obtaining section [for identifying the audio contents of the data and obtaining the attribute information corresponding to the identified audio contents from the external equipment via said data transmission/receiving section;]

a data format conversion section [for converting the audio contents together with the obtained attribute information to the super distribution data format;] and

a controller controlling said data

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transmission/receiving section, data format judging section, attribute information obtaining section, and data format conversion section,

[wherein, in the case where said data format judging section judges that the received data is not of the super distribution format, said attribute information obtaining section is so controlled as to obtain the attribute information corresponding to the audio contents from the external equipment, and wherein said data format conversion section is so controlled as to convert the received audio contents together with the obtained attribute information into the super distribution format data, so that the resultant data converted to the super distribution data format is outputted and supplied to the external recording apparatus.]

2. The data conversion apparatus as claimed in claim 1 further comprising data outputting section, wherein in the case where said data format judging section judges that the received data is of the super distribution format, said controller so controls said data outputting section as to supply the received super distribution format data to said external recording apparatus.

3. The data conversion apparatus as claimed in claim

charging section for executing a charging operation based on the charge condition of the attribute information,

4. The data conversion apparatus as claimed in claim 3, wherein said data transmission/receiving section includes a data read-out portion for reading the data out of a disc medium recorded with the data containing the audio contents and includes a network interface which receives the attribute information corresponding to the audio contents from an external server via a digital network,

and wherein said attribute information obtaining section obtains identification information read out of the disc medium and transmits the obtained identification information to the external server via the digital network

and receives attribute information corresponding to the audio data recorded in the disc medium from the external server.

5 5. The data conversion apparatus as claimed in claim 4, wherein said attribute information obtaining section obtains the identification information of the disc medium by way of use's direct input operation thereof.

10 6. The data conversion apparatus as claimed in claim 4, wherein said attribute information obtaining section obtains the identification information of the disc medium by extracting the number of pieces and reproduction time of the audio contents recorded in the disc medium.

15 7. The data conversion apparatus as claimed in claim 4, wherein said network interface is connected to an external charging device via the digital network so that said charging section executes the charging operation based on the charge information in cooperation with the external charging device.

20 8. A data conversion method [converting data including audio contents to super distribution format data and outputting the super distribution format data to be

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supplied to an external recording stage to be recorded therein,]

5 said super distribution format data including said audio contents and attribute information which represents at least a charge condition permitting a copy of the audio contents,

said data conversion method comprising the steps of:

transmitting and receiving data to and from an external equipment;

10 judging whether or not the data is of a super distribution format;

identifying the audio contents of the data and obtaining the attribute information corresponding to the identified audio contents from the external equipment;

15 converting the audio contents together with the obtained attribute information to the super distribution data format; and

controlling said data transmission/receiving step, data format judging step, attribute information obtaining step and data format conversion step,

20 [wherein, in the case where said data format judging step judges that the received data is not of the super distribution format, said attribute information obtaining step is so controlled as to obtain the attribute
25 information corresponding to the audio contents from the

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external equipment, and wherein said data format conversion step is so controlled as to convert the received audio contents together with the obtained attribute information into the super distribution format data, so that the resultant data converted to the super distribution data format is outputted and supplied to the external recording stage.

9. The data conversion method as claimed in claim 8 further comprising a data outputting step, wherein in the case where said data format judging step judges that the received data is of the super distribution format, said control step so controls said data outputting step as to supply the received super distribution format data to said external recording stage.

10. The data conversion method as claimed in claim 9 further comprising the steps of: recording the super distribution format data; and

executing a charging operation based on the charge condition of the attribute information, wherein said control step so controls said charging step as to execute the charging operation of the super distribution format data based on the charge condition of the attribute information when a copy of the super distribution format

data read out by said recording step is supplied to said external recording stage to be recorded therein.

11. The data conversion method as claimed in claim 10,
5 wherein said data transmission/receiving step includes a data read-out step for reading the data out of a disc medium recorded with the data containing the audio contents and includes a data receiving step receiving the attribute information corresponding to the audio contents by a
10 network interface from an external server via a digital network,
and wherein said attribute information obtaining step obtains identification information read out of the disc medium and transmits the obtained identification
15 information to the external server via the digital network and receives attribute information corresponding to the audio data recorded in the disc medium from the external server.

20 12. The data conversion method as claimed in claim 11, wherein said attribute information obtaining step obtains the identification information of the disc medium by way of use's direct input operation thereof.

25 13. The data conversion method as claimed in claim 11,

wherein said attribute information obtaining step obtains the identification information of the disc medium by extracting the number of pieces and reproduction time of the audio contents recorded in the disc medium.

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14. The data conversion method as claimed in claim 11, wherein the network interface is connected to an external charging device via the digital network so that said charging step executes the charging operation based on the charge information in cooperation with the external charging device.

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15. (A program storage medium) storing a program of a

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data conversion method converting data including audio contents to super distribution format data and outputting the super distribution format data to be supplied to an external recording stage to be recorded therein,

said super distribution format data including said audio contents and attribute information which represents at least a charge condition permitting a copy of the audio contents,

[said data conversion method comprising the steps of:

transmitting and receiving data to and from an external equipment;

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judging whether or not the data is of a super distribution format;

identifying the audio contents of the data and obtaining the attribute information corresponding to the identified audio contents from the external equipment;

converting the audio contents together with the obtained attribute information to the super distribution data format; and

controlling said data transmission/receiving step, data format judging step, attribute information obtaining step and data format conversion step,

wherein, in the case where said data format judging step judges that the received data is not of the super distribution format, said attribute information obtaining step is so controlled as to obtain the attribute information corresponding to the audio contents from the external equipment, and wherein said data format conversion step is so controlled as to convert the received audio contents together with the obtained attribute information into the super distribution format data, so that the resultant data converted to the super distribution data format is outputted and supplied to the external recording stage.

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16. The program storage medium as claimed in claim 15

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further comprising a data outputting step, wherein in the case where said data format judging step judges that the received data is of the super distribution format, said control step so controls said data outputting step as to supply the received super distribution format data to said external recording stage.

17. The program storage medium as claimed in claim 16 further comprising the steps of: recording the super distribution format data; and
executing a charging operation based on the charge condition of the attribute information, wherein said control step so controls said charging step as to execute the charging operation of the super distribution format data based on the charge condition of the attribute information when a copy of the super distribution format data read out by said recording step is supplied to said external recording stage to be recorded therein.

18. The program storage medium as claimed in claim 17, wherein said data transmission/receiving step includes a data read-out step for reading the data out of a disc medium recorded with the data containing the audio contents and includes a data receiving step receiving the attribute information corresponding to the audio contents by a

network interface from an external server via a digital network,

and wherein said attribute information obtaining step obtains identification information read out of the disc medium and transmits the obtained identification information to the external server via the digital network and receives attribute information corresponding to the audio data recorded in the disc medium from the external server.

19. The program storage medium as claimed in claim 18, wherein said attribute information obtaining step obtains the identification information of the disc medium by way of use's direct input operation thereof.

20. The program storage medium as claimed in claim 18, wherein said attribute information obtaining step obtains the identification information of the disc medium by extracting the number of pieces and reproduction time of the audio contents recorded in the disc medium.

21. The program storage medium as claimed in claim 18, wherein the network interface is connected to an external charging device via the digital network so that said charging step executes the charging operation based on the

charge information in cooperation with the external
charging device.

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